LOST IN NEW YORK CITY

Although I walked alone I walked among
a grand pedestrian parade that thronged the
streets through which I passed. The rain
had also passed. The clouds were gone and
sunset showed redly between the buildings. Street lights,
yet to glow, left dim shadows to run where I
just plodded carefully, listening to sounds I saw
fall from the hands and feet and mouths of those around the
corners of every square traversed. I could not figure
out their meanings, nor did I try. I walked this way for 4, or was it 5,
hours, as afternoon fell into night. I found myself in
a part of town I'd never been. Street lights gold
now lit my way and cast a golden spell on
everything around. A young boy raced across my path to jump in a
car and slam the door as it jolted from the curb to run a red
light just ahead, ignoring the noise of a firetruck
racing through the intersection moments later, moving
at speed toward some disaster. I felt the people near me tense,
saw their excited exchange of glances all round, while I, unheeded,
stopped and tried to absorb with every sense, to
dissolve into this roaring world, hearing the gong
that summons me to my soul's dinner, the bell that clangs
to mark the hour of prayer, the beckoning of siren
songs, all luring me to listen, not to the warning howls,
but to the sounds inside them, at once unknowable and
always known. When Ezekiel saw those wheels
awhirl way up in the middle of the air, felt the earth rumbling
down in its deepest bowels, smelled the smoke of incense through
the gates of heaven, was this the
way he experienced it all? Overwhelmed by dark
amidst the light and sound of a great city.